

and in sins (Eph 2:1-3), all men are utterly helpless by nature. We do not have the ability in ourselves to obey the gospel any more than we have the ability to obey the law of God. Salvation comes by believing on Christ; but dead sinners cannot believe. The Bible doctrine of total depravity is just this: All men by nature are sinful, guilty, and helpless. Unless God intervenes and does for man what man cannot do for himself, all men will perish. "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9).

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

Before the world began God chose to save some men in eternal, electing love and predestinated them to be his sons by adoption. God's loving choice of his people was in Christ his Son, whom he had appointed to be the Mediator, Substitute, and Representative of his people. Election was a sovereign and unconditional act of Divine grace. God did not choose his elect because he foresaw something good and meritorious in them. He chose his own elect simply because, he will be gracious, and he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. God's election of his people in Christ is immutable and irreversible. That is to say, God's election of his people guarantees and secures their eternal salvation in Christ. All who were chosen by God in election and given to Christ shall be saved. Not one of God's elect shall ever perish. This is clearly the doctrine of the Bible. (Read John 6:37-40; Rom 9:11-16).

All of God's people rejoice in and give thanks to God for his electing love. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him: in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:3-6). The Bible doctrine of election simply says that all who are saved were chosen by God to be saved, because he loved them with an everlasting love. in its very beginning, before the foundations of the earth were laid, "Salvation is of the Lord." This blessed gospel doctrine of Divine election, which so greatly rejoices the hearts of God's people, is taught throughout the volume of inspiration. (Read Jer 31:3; Psa 65:4, John 15:16; Matt 11:25-26; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 1:9).

LIMITED ATONEMENT

The Lord Jesus Christ shed his blood at Calvary for God's elect. Christ died to redeem God's elect alone. The Son of God did not shed his blood in vain, which would not be true if any of those for whom he died perish in hell. It was never our Lord's intention to redeem and save all men. He even refused to pray for all men (John 17:9, 20). It would be absurd to think that Christ died for men

for whom he would not say a prayer! The sin atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ is limited to those who are actually saved by his blood.

In order for God to save his people, justice had to be satisfied, sin had to be punished, the sinner had to be slain. Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world as the Substitute and Representative of God's elect people. Living in righteous obedience to the law of God as the Representative of his people, Christ established perfect righteousness for us. Dying under the penalty of sin as our Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ satisfied the claims of Divine justice against us. Because the justice of God has been satisfied for God's elect, by the death of his Son, God will never charge his own elect with sin. He imputes the righteousness of Christ to every believer, and rewards us for righteousness.

The doctrine of the Bible is just this: when Christ died as the Substitute of his people he effectually accomplished the eternal redemption of all God's elect, those people for whom he died, all who believe in him. This is what God says about the death of his Son—"For the transgression of my people was he stricken" (Isa 53:8). "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa 53:10,11). "He hath made him to be sin for us; who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor 5:21). "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal 3:13). No one who knows Christ can tolerate the notion that he failed in his work, that he tries to save men whom he cannot save, and that he died to redeem some who are not redeemed. Such doctrine robs Christ of his glory in redemption and destroys all hope for sinners. All of God's people rejoice to know that Christ died particularly for them and effectually accomplished their redemption in his death. "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb 9:12). We rejoice to declare that "Salvation is of the Lord."

IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

God the Holy Spirit comes to the sinners who were chosen by God in election and redeemed by Christ at Calvary and effectually applies the blood of Christ to their hearts, creating faith in them. He sovereignly comes to men who are spiritually dead and gives them life. Through the preaching of the gospel he regenerates all the elect and draws them to Christ with irresistible power. We have no faith in Christ by nature; but he creates faith in us. We would not come to Christ of our own accord, by our own free-will, but he makes us willing in the day of his power. The Holy Spirit does not try to get men to believe and come to Christ. With the effectual and irresistible power of his grace, the Holy Spirit brings sinners to Christ in true faith. This is the doctrine of Holy Scripture. "Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth and causeth to approach unto thee"

(Psa 65:4). "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Psa 110:3). "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" John 6:44-45). "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63). "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom 9:16). In regeneration, as in election and redemption, "Salvation is of the Lord."

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

According to the Word of God, all true believers shall continue in the grace of God until they reach their heavenly inheritance. Not one of God's elect shall ever perish. The purpose of God in election will not allow it. The purchase of Christ in redemption will not allow it. The grace of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, by which we are preserved in life, will not allow it. And the Word of God, which he has plainly spoken, will not allow one of the Lord's sheep to be lost in the end. God himself declares, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27-28).

These five basic gospel truths give great comfort and joy to all true believers. They are the very foundations of our faith. We rejoice to declare to all men that we believe the Bible doctrines of TOTAL DEPRAVITY, UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION, LIMITED ATONEMENT, IRRESISTIBLE GRACE, and the PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS. Only those who are opposed to the grace of God are opposed to these things. In stating plainly what the Bible teaches about these things, the people of God are simply declaring what we know to be true—"Salvation is of the Lord!" "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph 2:8-9). "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake" (Psa 115:1).

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JUST IN CASE YOU'RE INTERESTED...

Just in case you are interested in your soul, interested in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, interested in the truth of God, and interested in what the Bible teaches about the salvation of sinners by the grace of God, this has been written for you. It is very brief, but very important. It states in plain, clear language five of the most precious and most important truths revealed in the Word of God. These five basic Bible truths have always been received and taught by the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout the history of Christianity, the servants of God have preached these truths of the gospel, and the people of God have delighted in them. Today they are just as precious as they were when they were taught by our Lord and his apostles. Among the people of God, these truths are just as popular as they were then. And the servants of God still proclaim these gospel truths just as regularly as the apostles of the New Testament age. Divine truth never grows old. If you are interested in your own soul, the souls of men, and the glory of Christ, these blessed truths will bring joy and comfort to your heart, as you see how they are taught in the Word of God. Are you interested?

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

All men, by nature, since the sin and fall of our father Adam, are guilty and helpless sinners before God. By God's own arrangement Adam was the representative of all mankind before God, so that when Adam sinned, we all sinned in him. When Adam suffered the penalty of sin, death, we all died. This is clearly the doctrine of Holy Scripture. "By one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom 5:12). The guilt of Adam's sin was imputed to all men without exception. "By the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (Rom 5:18). All men were in Adam as our representative before God. All men sinned in Adam. All men were condemned in Adam. And all men died spiritually in Adam.

All men are born in spiritual death. We do not become sinners when we reach a certain age and commit certain evil deeds. We were all born sinners. Being the sons and daughters of Adam, we inherited our father's nature—sin. We are all born with a decided bias and tendency toward evil. Every member of the human race is born with a corrupt, sinful heart, which is capable of every evil thing, were it not restrained by the hand of God in providence. This is what the Son of God says about the natural human heart— "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt 15:19). Because our hearts are evil, everything we do is marred by the pride and selfishness and evil of our hearts. We do not have the ability, the will, or the potential to do a single thing that is truly and perfectly good and righteous. "There is none righteous... There is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom 3:10,12). Because all men are spiritually dead in trespasses